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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rabbi Milton Balkany of the Congregation Bais Yaakov of Brooklyn, NY.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Our Father in heaven!

I sing You a song for the blessed United States of America. I sing a hopeful song for the peace and tranquility that we seek. Every patriotic soul joins me and our voices blend in heartfelt harmony. Let our notes wend their way from the hot Mojave sands to the cool waters of the Great Lakes. Let our song echo in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark as they courageously unraveled the mysteries of this free land. Let our lyrical prayer soar up the peaks of Mount Hood and Mount McKinley until they reach the summit of Your glory and Your mercy.

Though our voices are many, though our accents and inflections are as different as the day is long, our song is one and our one song is plain and true and unchanging. We sing: peace. Peace. True Peace. Bring us back to the times of fearless skies and unbridled New York nerve, of tranquil school yards and cool back porch nights. Return these times to us, O G-D. And we will return to You—with a new song, a mighty, rapturous chorus of jubilation! Amen!

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we will shortly resume consideration of S. 1, the prescription drug benefits bill. We have been in discussion with the distinguished assistant Democratic leader about votes later this morning. We hope to be able to have an announcement shortly about when the votes will commence. Obviously we will stay on this bill all day today. We will be finishing it this week, hopefully Thursday night. We are going to press forward and encourage Members to continue to offer their amendments. We will try to get votes as rapidly as we can.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the amendment I understand that has been the focus of so much the last few days is prepared and the two leaders are looking this over. We hope to be able to have a vote on that soon. In the meantime, I have a lot of amendments lined up that we can move on and I will work with my distinguished friend, the majority whip, in determining when we can do that. We hope in the next hour we will start a bunch of votes. We will work on that and the majority will make an announcement soon.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2003

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the hour of 9:30 having arrived, the Senate will proceed to

consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make improvements in the medicare program, to provide prescription drug coverage under the medicare program, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Graham (FL) amendment No. 956, to provide that an eligible beneficiary is not responsible for paying the applicable percent of the monthly national average premium while the beneficiary is in the coverage gap and to sunset the bill.

Kerry amendment No. 958, to increase the availability of discounted prescription drugs.

Lincoln modified amendment No. 934, to ensure coverage for syringes for the administration of insulin, and necessary medical supplies associated with the administration of insulin.

Lincoln amendment No. 935, to clarify the intent of Congress regarding an exception to the initial residency period for geriatric residency or fellowship programs.

Lincoln amendment No. 959, to establish a demonstration project for direct access to physical therapy services under the Medicare program.

Baucus (for Jeffords) amendment No. 964, to include coverage for tobacco cessation products.

Baucus (for Jeffords) amendment No. 965, to establish a Council for Technology and Innovation.

Nelson (FL) amendment No. 938, to provide for a study and report on the propagation of concierge care.

Nelson (FL) amendment No. 936, to provide for an extension of the demonstration for ESRD managed care.

Baucus (for Harkin) amendment No. 967, to provide improved payment for certain mammography services.

Baucus (for Harkin) amendment No. 968, to restore reimbursement for total body orthotic management for nonambulatory, severely disabled nursing home residents.

Baucus (for Cantwell) amendment No. 942, to prohibit an eligible entity offering a Medicare Prescription Drug plan, a Medicare Advantage Organization offering a Medicare Advantage plan, and other health plans from contracting with a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) unless the PBM satisfies certain requirements.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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